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Cleanup 'refocus' closes

Money saved will finance other projects

By CHRIS ROBERTS
Camera Staff Writer

Two areas at Rocky Flats have been closed and no further cleanup is planned in the near future under an agreement approved by the state health department and the Environmental Protection Agency.

Although some minimal pollution may

exist at the closed sites, they do not pose a health risk and are not priorities in a restructuring of the cleanup effort, which is putting a greater focus on radioactive contamination, health officials said Tuesday.

"These accelerated closures will save nearly \$8 million, which can now be applied to more pressing environmental projects," said Mark Silverman, the Department of Energy manager for the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site, located 8 miles south of Boulder.

The closed sites include the West Spray Field, 165 acres west of the industrial zone at the center of the plant,

two Rocky Flats sites

and areas inside buildings that had been used to store and process waste.

"The idea is to clean down the fairly innocuous things and get on with it," said Ken Korkin of the Rocky Flats Operations Advisory Board. "In the spray fields, they used waste treatment water, and the primary contamination was nitrates. There was minimal, if any, radioactive contamination."

Korkin said the sites inside buildings will be revisited when a decision is made about what to do with the buildings.

Bob True, spokesman for the Colorado Department of Public Health and

Environment, said the action came after the areas were thoroughly studied and it was decided by the DOE, the health department and the EPA that no further action was necessary in those areas.

"It just closes them out," True said. "We are now done with those operable units, and our attention will be focused on other areas that will require clean-up."

"The closure of those areas represents progress at Rocky Flats," said Tom Lohy, director of the health department Office of Environment. "Much more difficult closures and decisions are ahead, but I'm convinced we can get the job done if we work together."



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